

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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CONTENTS.—*Let. to Ld. Auckland*, 674. *Fox and O'Connor*, 687. *St. Domingo*, 688. *Egypt*, 689. *Emp. and Swiss*, 689. *Despard*, 689. *Parl. King's Speech*, 690. *Sum. Pol.* 693. *Swiss*, 693. *Exped. Louisiana*, 694. *House of Baring*, 696. *French Importation of Hemp*, 697. *French Commercial Agents*, 702.

673]

## ABUSES IN THE GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

It will be perceived, that the following letter was written to the noble lord, to whom it is addressed, so long ago as the month of June, 1801. The writer received an answer almost immediately, but that answer was in terms that left him perfectly in the dark as to his lordship's intentions. He has, therefore, waited patiently for redress; till, perceiving no likelihood of seeing that redress take place, he thinks it not improper to lay his complaint before the People, by whose opinion, now-a-days, the Ministers themselves are, or affect to be, guided. The writer has now no private interest that can possibly be affected by the abuses of which his letter complains; and he begs the reader to observe, that it could in no wise have originated from the violence committed on his premises by the clerks in the Post-Office, seeing that it was written nearly twelve months before they were guilty of that crime. On the contrary, however, he cannot help observing, that he had good reason to suspect, that it was the people of the General Post-Office who headed the mob in the demolition of his house in October, 1801, that is to say, in four months after the letter was written; nor will he be denied the justice further to make known, that CHARLES BELOE (son of the Rev. William Beloe), and CHARLES WAGSTAFFE, the two clerks, who were convicted of having headed the mob at his house, in April last, were not only retained in their places in the General Post-Office, but were never suspended for a moment, on account of a crime, for which they were committed to jail, for which they were indicted, and of which they were convicted.—The truth is, that the writer of this letter did intend to publish it at the meeting of Parliament, last year; but he was restrained by the fear, that the publication might possibly tend to excite disaffection towards the Government (not the ministers), a fear which is now completely subdued by the hope of preventing the Post-Office clerks from continuing (through the means of the abuses here complained of) to circulate over the

kingdom, the libels, published at Paris, against his Majesty and his Government.

*Pall-Mall, June 15, 1801.*

MY LORD,—I take the liberty to submit to your lordship some facts and observations on a matter which, in my humble judgment, calls for the interference of his Majesty's Post-Master-General. — Unaccustomed as I am to the making of applications of this nature, I trust that your lordship will overlook any little irregularity that may be perceived in my mode of proceeding, as I assure your lordship that I approach you with all the deference and respect which are due from the most humble to one of the most exalted of his Majesty's subjects.

When I began the publication of my Newspaper, the Porcupine, I placed great dependance on the circulation which it would obtain in the United States of America, in his Majesty's Colonies on that continent, and in the West-India Islands, where my former customers were very numerous, and whence a previous intimation of my design had brought me in advance a great number of orders for my London Porcupine. To this intercourse, which promised much advantage to myself, some increase to the revenue of the kingdom, and, as I hoped, no harm to the political interests of his Majesty's Government, I met with an insurmountable obstacle, precisely where I expected to find the means of conducting it, with facility. I mean in the General-Post-Office.

The King's packet-boats are, more especially in time of war, the only frequent, regular, and sure means of conveying Newspapers to either of the countries above mentioned, and I naturally concluded that the terms of sending papers by those boats were similar to those on which they were and still are sent to the different parts of Great-Britain and Ireland. I supposed that they were carried post-free to Falmouth, and that they were, after being landed at Kingston or at Halifax, for instance, conveyed post-free to the person to whom they were directed. And with re-

[674



spect to the United States, I could not possibly conceive that newspapers were loaded with a sea-postage, seeing that even letters, which bring no stamp duty to the revenue, are encumbered with no such charges.

Under this impression I took the liberty to apply to Mr. Freeling, the secretary and surveyor of the General Post-Office,\* for information as to the mode of transmitting papers through that office. In answer to this application, Mr. Freeling informed me,† that the exclusive privilege of forwarding newspapers and other periodical publications to the West-Indies and America had been granted to him, as a remuneration for public services, and that his charge for forwarding a daily paper to either of those countries was *five guineas a year*.

This information, together with the very high terms it specified, astonished me much. I was deceived by the Red Book, if Mr. Freeling did not receive, as secretary and surveyor, twelve hundred pounds sterling a year, fixed salary; and though I could form no judgment of his public services, I humbly conceived that whatever farther remuneration his Majesty's Government might think proper to make him, was never intended to enhance so greatly the expences of newspapers to those who happened to reside in the Colonies, particu-

\* *Pall-Mall* (No. 18), Nov. 24, 1800.—SIR,—There are several files of the Porcupine ordered in Canada and Nova Scotia, and the gentlemen who have ordered them inform me, that they have been in the habit of receiving other papers through the General Post-Office, franked by you, and without any additional expence on account of postage. Being a stranger to the mode of doing this business, I take the liberty to request that you will be pleased to inform me how and at what time the papers are to be sent to the Post-Office.

am, Sir, &c. &c.

(Signed)

WM. COBBETT.

General Post-Office, Nov. 25, 1800.

† SIR,—I have received the favour of your letter, relative to the mode of forwarding newspapers to America.

In reply to which I beg leave to inform you, that the exclusive privilege of forwarding newspapers and periodical publications to the West-Indies and America has been granted to me, as a remuneration for public services, and that the expence of forwarding a daily paper to America is £5:5:0 per year. Any papers which you may wish to send to America, you may depend on being forwarded with the utmost regularity by my clerk, or their being sent to him at this office.—I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant.

(Signed)

F. Freeling.

William Cobbett, Esq.

larly when it was considered that such enhancement must materially injure the revenue, at the same time that it operated as a bar to our most useful, commercial, and political connexions, and, which I thought of still greater moment, as a novel and very dangerous controul over the Liberty of the Press. The rate appeared to me to be out of all reason. Five guineas a year for a daily paper nearly double the original cost, and must inevitably operate as a severe check on the exportation of an article, which, if not very necessary to the importer, is at least very productive to the State.

My desire to execute the orders I had received, did however urge me to endeavour to surmount this formidable obstacle. I wrote again to Mr. Freeling,\* stating that the expence of five guineas a year on each paper was more than I thought myself at liberty to impose on my friends, without having previously obtained their consent for so doing; that I should, therefore, for the present, endeavour to send my papers by the merchant ships; that I should write to my customers, informing them of his terms, and that in the mean time I should be glad to know if he had any objection to

*Pall-Mall*, Nov. 25, 1800.

\* SIR,—A Nova Scotia gentleman led me into a mistake, or I misunderstood him. I conceived from what he said, that the paper, if sent through the Post-Office, would cost no more to a customer in Nova Scotia than to a customer in London. Had this been the case, I should have sent by the packet several hundred sets to America and the West-Indies, but the additional expence of five guineas a year is more than I think myself at liberty to impose on my friends, without having previously obtained their consent for so doing. Till, therefore, I receive an answer to the letters which I shall immediately dispatch, I shall send the papers by ship to New York and Kingston. In the mean time give me leave to ask, if you have any objection to my inserting a notice in my paper, specifying the terms on which it may be had by the King's packet? This would save me a good deal of trouble in writing, and would be an useful article of information to a great many merchants here, who wish to send out papers to their correspondents, and who do not know any thing of the regulations which have been established at the Post-Office.—I am, Sir, &c. &c.

(Signed)

Wm. Cobbett.

Francis Freeling, Esq.

P.S. I shall have in America and the West-Indies about 500 constant customers. Three hundred and ninety-seven sets are already ordered. Would not a couple of guineas a year for each customer, (considering the great number) be an allowance worth accepting of? I should think it would, especially if I paid you the 794 guineas down in advance, which, were we to agree, I should have no objection to do.



my inserting a notice in my paper, specifying the terms on which the paper might be had by the King's packet-boats. I informed him, at the same time, that I should send three hundred and ninety-seven papers, and asked him if two guineas a year for each paper would not be worth his acceptance, provided that I paid him down the seven hundred and ninety-four guineas in advance.

To this I received an immediate and a very polite answer from Mr. Freeling,\* who was so good as to say that he was very desirous to meet my wishes to the utmost of his power, and to converse with me on a subject on which our mutual interests seemed to be so materially concerned. He proposed a meeting at the Post-Office; or, if more convenient to me, he condescended to offer to call upon me, the next day, in his way to the Treasury, which latter, for the reasons mentioned in my letter † was preferred.

Mr. Freeling accordingly called upon me at my house in Pall-Mall. He now offered, ‡ to forward my papers at the rate

\* Mr. Freeling presents his compliments to Mr. Cobbett, he is very desirous to meet Mr. C.'s wishes to the utmost of his power, and if Mr. C. can call at the Post-Office to-morrow morning before twelve, he shall be glad to converse with him upon a subject in which their mutual interest seems to be so materially concerned—or, if it be more convenient to Mr. Cobbett, Mr. Freeling will readily call upon him at one o'clock to-morrow on his way to the Treasury.

General Post-Office, Nov. 26, 1800.

† Sir,—In acknowledging your favour of this morning, I am sorry it is not in my power to say, that I will wait on you, but I trust you will have the goodness to excuse me for requesting you to call here, when I assure you, that it is absolutely impossible for me to stir from home without neglecting some part of my multifarious business. I am preparing large shipments of books, &c. for America and the West-Indies. I have invoices, letters, &c. &c. to prepare, and have not a soul to assist me. It, therefore, you will do me the honour to call here to-morrow at the hour you mention, or at any other hour more convenient to you, you will very much oblige, Sir, your most humble and most obedient Servant,

(Signed) Wm. Cobbett.

Francis Freeling, Esq. Sec. Gen. Post-Office.

Pall-Mall, Nov. 27, 1800.

‡ Memorandum.—Mr. Francis Freeling, Secretary of the General Post Office, called on me at my house to-day. He proposed to send my papers to America and the West Indies, at the rate of three guineas for a year's papers, in consideration of my sending such great numbers, and also in consideration of my paying down the whole of the money in advance, as hinted at in my letter to him of the 25th instant. He observed that my

of three guineas for a year's papers, in consideration of my paying down the whole of the money in advance, as hinted in my letter (see p. 676); but observed at the same time, that my papers, by arriving abroad at a lower price than those of other persons, would certainly cause mine to be taken in preference to those of others; and therefore, he hinted, that it would not be proper to make our contract known, lest other printers should think themselves ill used. He desired me to think of his proposal, and to let him know the result, which closed our conversation on the subject. I did think of the proposal; but the

papers arriving abroad at a lower price than those of other persons, would certainly cause mine to be taken in preference to others; and therefore he hinted that it would not be proper to make our contract known, lest other Printers should think themselves ill used. He expressed a great desire to do me or my paper any service in his power, I replied I could take the liberty to ask him for nothing but the advertisements from his office. These he assured me I should have; and he farther said, that the only reason that prevented me from having received the advertisements hitherto was, that it was not the custom of the Post Office to send them to papers, till those papers were established by a probation of three months; but that I might now, (when my paper had been begun only 29 days) depend upon having them, and upon receiving every other assistance he could give my paper. I observed that there were doubtless other papers to which he might very reasonably be more attached, and that I should think it no hardship not to be permitted to participate in his favours with those papers. In answer to which he said, that there were no papers that merited more favour from him than mine did; and that every friend of the Government and the country ought to look upon it as his duty to assist me. He next asked me why I refused to publish the advertisements of his father-in-law, Mr. Newbery, the medicine-seller? I told him I had no objection, provided the advertisements contained no obscene or filthy expression or allusion. After this he pulled out a letter which he had just received from Hamburgh, dated Nov. 18, giving an account of an express having arrived from Russia, stating that the Emperor Paul had laid an embargo on all the British ships in the port of Riga, amounting to seventy in number. We then returned to the newspaper business;—He desired me to think of his proposal and let him know the result. I told him I would, and so we parted. (Signed) Wm. Cobbett.

Certificate.—William Cobbett of Pall-Mall, appeared before me, John Gifford, Esq. one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Counties of Middlesex, Essex, Surrey, and Kent, and swore to the truth of the contents of the above memorandum.

Given under my hand and seal, this fifteenth day of June, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and one.

(Signed) John Gifford. (L. S.)



more I thought of it, the more I was convinced of the impropriety of acceding to it. Previous to this interview, I might have consented to give even the three guineas a year for each set of papers; but when, from the conversation of Mr. Freeling, I found I should, under a promise of secrecy, thereby obtain an unfair, if not an unlawful advantage over my contemporaries, my mind revolted at the clandestine compact, and I resolved neither to avail myself of the proffered terms, nor to encourage the continuance of what I could not help regarding as an abuse of office, with which his Majesty's Post-Master-General was totally unacquainted.

Such, my lord, are the *facts* which I have thought it right to lay before you. The observations which I am about to add, are submitted with great deference to your lordship's better judgment.

The regulations of which I complain may be considered under four points of view: to wit, 1. The hardship which these regulations impose on his Majesty's subjects who reside in the colonies. 2. The injury to the political influence of Great-Britain. 3. The injury which they do to the revenue of the kingdom. 4. The undue influence which they give the Secretary of the Post-Office over the Press.

1. I humbly presume that while those of his Majesty's subjects who reside in the United Kingdom are furnished with newspapers free of postage, there can be no solid reason why those who reside in the Colonies should be compelled to forego the amusement, the information, and satisfaction to be derived from this source; the amount of the price which is paid by those of their fellow subjects who remain in Europe. That the inhabitants of the Colonies, whether on the Continent of America, or in the West-Indies, are as deserving of the indulgence of the government as are the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, I am persuaded will be denied by no one who is acquainted with their loyalty and public spirit.

2. The influence of the Press on the opinions of men, and finally on the affairs of nations, has now become fearfully manifest, even to the most superficial observer, and that this influence must be felt abroad as well as at home there can be no doubt.

With the Colonies a constant communication through the channel of the press is still more necessary. As the affections of separated relations are kept alive by the aid of letters, so are those of the Mother-Country and her Colonies by the aid of the Press. The perpetual motion of this potent machine preserves the chain from that rust which first corrodes, and finally cuts it asunder. Every tax, therefore, under whatever name it may be imposed, that lessens the exportation to the countries above-mentioned of the productions of the English Press, has a direct tendency to destroy the influence of Britain, and to sever from her that attachment which it is her undoubted interest to preserve.

3. The injury to the revenue from this privilege of Mr. Freeling is very great. It prevents me from exporting as many papers as would yield a stamp duty of £1600 a year; to which must be added the duty on the paper before it is printed, which is very considerable. Besides newspapers, the monthly publications are also loaded with this franking impost; and it appears to me that at a very moderate computation, the loss to the revenue, from the operation of the privilege I complain of, cannot be less than one hundred and forty thousand pounds a year.

4. But, not any nor all of these considerations, important as they are, are of nearly so much importance as the great, the undue, and dangerous influence over the Press, given by this privilege to the Secretary of the General Post-Office. The *Freedom of the Press* has for many years been a favourite in this island, and however it may have been abused, it is yet a favourite. It is the boast of Englishmen. But the Freedom of the Press does not consist merely in the right of printing and publishing. If the circulation of a thing be impeded after it is published, the liberty to publish it is of very little use to the public or the nation. Viewing the impediment in a more mercantile light, the success of the printing trade, like that of every other, ought to be left to depend on the industry, the enterprise, the talents, and integrity of the tradesman, and ought never to be interfered in by government; for if the government, either by exclusive licenses or by exclusive privileges, grant to one man, or to any number of men, the sole power of vending newspapers, for instance, in a certain district, or the sole power of sending



them there to be vended, as far as that license or privilege extends, it completely annihilates that fair competition, which is the great spur to individual exertion, and the never-failing source of national prosperity. Were Government to propose a tax, a certain fixed and uniform rate on the franking of newspapers and other periodical publications to America and the Islands, the regulation would, in my opinion, be a great hardship on the Colonists, and would be very injurious to our foreign connexions, as well as to the revenue; but to authorise a secretary to the Post-Office to vary the rate as his personal partialities, his private interests, or his political opinions may dictate, is to vest in a single subaltern officer of Government, a power which I conceive never ought to be entrusted to any Minister, or to any department of the State; a power so extensive in its influence, so dangerous in its consequences, so contrary to the spirit of our laws, and so abhorrent from the best sentiments of Englishmen, that I cannot help regarding the exclusive privilege of Mr. Freeling, as an assumption entirely unwarranted by his Majesty's Post-Master General.

Having ventured, my lord, to trouble you with this grievance, I beg leave to trespass a little farther on your time with the representation of some others, part of which appear to me to have grown out of it.

Since it was found, from my long silence, that I would not submit to the terms of the Secretary, I have experienced every species of injury that it was possible for him and his inferiors to do to my undertaking, which, without the effects of their enmity, has had, God knows, difficulties enough to struggle with.

My American newspapers, which generally come by the merchant ships, and are deposited in the Post-Offices at Dover, Bristol, or Liverpool, were, previous to my rejection of Mr. Freeling's proposal, delivered to me at the rate of ten shillings and sixpence for a package; but since that time they have been presented to me, as before, with the enormous charge of five or six guineas on them, and have not, upon a discovery of the contents of the package, even been offered me upon lower terms. These papers are of great value to me; but the Secretary doubtless conceives that a greater "public service" is rendered by committing them to the flames, than by delivering them to me, though about ten guineas a year would thereby be added to the treasury of the kingdom.

But, my lord, these things are trifling, compared with another kind of hostility which I have every reason to believe the Post-Office is carrying on against my undertaking. The clerks of the roads exercise the business of newsmen; that is, they receive orders from the country, in consequence of which they send newspapers by post from London to the persons giving those orders. His Majesty's General Post-Office is thus rendered a sort of newsman's rendezvous, by which means the Secretary, clerks, &c. obtain a very great, though indirect, influence over the press, which influence it would require an uncommon portion of charity in me not to suspect, when employed to the detriment of my undertaking. Since it must have been well known that I had resolved not to yield to Mr. Freeling's proposal, I have received from almost every part of Great-Britain complaints of the irregular conveyance of the Porcupine. In many instances complainants have stated, that the paper was frequently replaced by the *True Briton*, the *Herald*, the *Times*, and in many instances by the *Morning Chronicle*. Detection is next to impossible; but when I compare this circumstance with the general conduct of the Post Office towards me, I can have little doubt as to the source of this cowardly hostility.

As to Hamburgh news, my lord, the clerks of the General Post-Office possess an almost absolute controul over the newspapers of the whole nation. When the Hamburgh Mail arrives, an abstract translation of the news which it brings is made out at the Post-Office; copies of this translation are taken, and carried to the several newspaper-offices, from the proprietors of each of which the clerks demand a guinea each time. Thus not only are the proprietors of newspapers laid under a heavy contribution, by persons who are already paid by the public, but the news with which that public is supplied, is left to the selection of men, on whose judgment, or on whose principles, I can see no reason for placing such implicit reliance.\* If I am told that the receiving of the transla-

\* This observation is now completely verified by the introduction of the *Arcus*, an English paper, published at Paris, abounding in the most false and infamous libels on his Majesty's person and government, and which is imported and sold by the clerks in the Post-Office.—We beg our readers to remember, too, what Professor Robison, in his "Proofs of a Conspiracy," says about the French gaining in the Post-Office, in the different countries, whose governments were to be subverted.



tion from them is the *voluntary* act of the proprietors of the several newspapers, I answer that it is not so. If the mail arrives too late for that day's delivery, then the proprietor of each morning paper must submit to give a guinea to these venders of what ought to be regarded as the secrets of the mail-bag, or his paper must be ruined by the advantage which others will thereby obtain over it; so that the purchasing of these translations is far from being a voluntary act, on the part of the proprietors of newspapers, who yield to the extortion from necessity and not from choice. The people of the Post-Office may, in these cases, demand whatever sum they please. They have the exclusive privilege of selling; a complete monopoly; however exorbitant their price, or insolent their manner of demanding it, it must be submitted to. Were the Hamburg papers sent round to the several newspaper-offices as soon as they arrive, be it when it may, the translations would be left to the talents and industry of the several proprietors of papers, each of whom would thereby avoid an expense of about 30 or 40l. a year; and it is certainly as easy to send round the foreign papers themselves as to make out and send round a translation from those papers. The people of the Post Office would, indeed, by such reform, be prevented from extorting about a thousand pounds a year from the proprietors of newspapers; but I am certain your lordship would not regard that circumstance as a diminution of the credit of the office over which you preside.

It is, my lord, in the nature of abuses to increase; accordingly the people of the Post-Office, having, without interruption, followed the trade of *newsmen*, and that of *editors*; having bought and sold manufactured newspapers, and supplied the manufacturers with the raw materials, conceived at last the idea of becoming manufacturers themselves. I have now before me a paper, having the King's arms at the head of it, and bearing the title of "General Shipping Commercial List," purporting to be "published by subscription at the General Post-Office, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday," and further purporting, what I was much astonished at, that it is published "conformably to a plan submitted to and approved by His Majesty's Post-Master General." This paper, my lord, always contains what I am sure your lordship never intended it should contain. It is a "List," but is to all intents and purposes a newspaper, though the proprietors have the assurance

to send it forth *without a stamp*, in open defiance of the law. This "List" contains an account of the price of stocks, foreign and domestic; of the course of exchange; of the rates of insurance; of the prices of corn and coals; of inward and outward bound vessels, as well ships of war as others; of captures and other occurrences at sea, and in the different parts of the world; of the situation and movements of His Majesty's fleets, and of those of the fleets of his enemies; of accidents, battles, defeats, and victories. If this be not a *newspaper* there is no such thing. Yet it is published *without a stamp*, and that too under the pretended sanction of your lordship. For a proof of what I have here asserted I could appeal to the whole of the numbers of this publication; but I shall here lay before your lordship an extract which I think will suffice.

"The Pheasant, from New Providence, arrived at Bermuda the 18th of April, brought intelligence there that H. M. frigates Cleopatra and Andromache, went on a secret expedition to cut out a number of Spanish ships from a port on the north side of Cuba, near Punta Malas, with all the boats they could collect, but succeeded in taking possession only of one armed schooner. The Spaniards were apprized of the attack by a schooner which sailed from New Providence three days before the frigates, and were ready with their gun-boats, batteries, &c. Lieut. Joseph Taylor and two midshipmen of the Cleopatra, with eight men, were killed, and a number wounded."

This extract, my lord, which I have copied from the "Shipping and Commercial List" of Monday, June 8, 1801, will, I am persuaded, leave no doubt on your lordship's mind as to the illegality of that publication. The injury which it is calculated to do to other news-papers, all of which are loaded with a heavy stamp duty, is evident. There are many persons who want to hear no news but that which this paper contains, and such persons will certainly prefer a three day in the week paper, which costs but 1l. 5s. a year, to one which costs 3l. 18s. This Post-Office paper prevents also the publication of a great number of commercial advertisements, the place of which it supplies, and does thereby, as well as by narrowing the circulation of stamped papers, very great injury to the revenue. This paper enjoys other peculiar advantages. Not only are the proprietors paid for their time by the public, but their paper is printed and published in the buildings appertaining

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to the Post-Office, and is conveyed through London and its environs by the letter-carriers, who are also paid for their time by the public: and further, the proprietors of this unstamped paper have a privilege which even members of parliament do not enjoy, to wit, that of sending their paper *postage free* by the Penny-Post. With an undertaking thus supported at the public expence, what private individual, my lord, can be supposed capable of maintaining a competition? For my part, I am so fully convinced of the injustice and illegality of this establishment, that, had it not assumed the sanction of your lordship, I should long ago have brought it to the test of the law.

But, my lord, it is not the injury that my interests have sustained, and do yet sustain, from the regulations of the Post-Office, and the conduct of its inferior officers, that would justify my having taken up so much of your lordship's time; it is the more serious injury which I am convinced must arise therefrom to the cause of truth, of real liberty, and of unfeigned loyalty, that has urged me to take up the pen on this occasion. From what I have stated, it is evident that the Secretary of the General Post-Office and his subalterns, possess an influence over the press which no man, or set of men, ever ought to possess. We may talk about the liberty of the press, my lord, but while the Secretary has the power, in virtue of his exclusive privilege of franking, to give one newspaper or other periodical publication a preference over another, in America and the West Indies, while this privilege enables him almost entirely to exclude from those extensive and populous countries any paper, or other periodical publication, which he happens to dislike; while his power of exacting the full postage for packets from America or elsewhere, or of remitting that postage at his will, places every newspaper at his mercy in a very important branch of its foreign concerns; and while the discretion vested in him, of giving or withholding, as his interest or prejudice may dictate, the advertising custom of the General Post-Office, creates, as it ever must do, a strong temptation in every news-printer to truckle to his will;—while the clerks of the roads, by carrying on the business of newsmen, have it in their power to add to the sale of one newspaper, and to diminish that of another, at the same time that the public purse supports them in a very unfair rivalry against the newsmen of London and Westminster: while the clerks in the Foreign Letter-Office assume the sole proprietorship of the

news that arrives by the *Hamburgh Mails*, which news they compel the proprietors of papers to purchase, which they sell on terms that they themselves dictate, and that they can vary towards different persons at their pleasure: while some people in the Post-Office, (no matter who) are permitted to publish a newspaper without a stamp, to print it in, and issue it from, buildings appropriated to the public use, and to circulate it, through the medium of the Penny-Post, postage free, at the same time that all other news-printers are compelled to pay a heavy stamp duty, to print and publish their papers in buildings provided at their own expence, and to allow a considerable percentage for the circulating of them; while these things are, my lord, we may, as I before observed, *talk about the liberty of the press*, we may think we possess it, we may even boast of it as the birth-right of Englishmen, but it will exist no where except in the imaginations of those who are unacquainted with the facts which I have submitted to your lordship.

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With all becoming respect and humility, with a full assurance that none of the abuses of which I have complained have been tolerated by your lordship, with a perfect submission to your superior judgment, and a perfect reliance on your impartiality and your justice, I remain, my lord, your lordship's most humble and most obedient servant,

(Signed) WM. COBBETT.\*

Right Hon. Lord Auckland.

\* I have no desire to swell the catalogue of neglects and abuses in this important office, otherwise I could give no very pleasing account of the Packet-Boat service, which is, in numerous instances, conducted, by the inferiors, in a manner scandalous to the last degree.—At home, too, I might mention the shameful imposition of what is called *early delivery-money*; that is, money levied, by the people of the General Post-Office, by way of payment for the delivery of letters, to particular persons, at an hour much earlier than letters are delivered to persons who do not submit to this imposition; whence it comes, that some persons, at the west end of the town in particular, have their letters at ten o'clock, while others, in the very same street, may not get their letters till twelve, or, perhaps, one or two o'clock; and there can be little doubt, that the *general delivery* is greatly retarded, in order to compel persons to pay for the *early delivery*.—Far be it from me to insinuate, that the Post-Master General winks at this abuse: it is impossible that he should: but, where is his secretary, where are his comptrollers, where the numerous host of inferior officers that are maintained by the public in this exorbitantly expensive department?



## MESSRS. FOX AND O'CONNOR.

In p. 338 *et seq.* of this work, Mr. Cobbett addressed a letter to the former of this pair of patriots, towards the close of which the following questions were put to him: "But, suppose, for a moment, that you were really obliged to go to Paris on this affair" [to examine manuscripts], "was ARTHUR O'CONNOR obliged to meet you at Calais, and to pass the evening with you *tête à tête*? Was he, soon after your arrival at Paris, obliged to follow you thither, in the company and in the carriage of Lord Oxford? And was Mr. Erskine obliged to break off from the enchantments of a jubilee, in order to meet you in the capital of the world?"—The correctness of the first of these assertions (for they are assertions in an interrogative form), has frequently been doubted by persons unacquainted with our scrupulous attention to facts; but, we think, that the following article, which we have extracted from the ARGUS (the English paper published at Paris) of the 20th instant, will completely remove all doubt upon the subject.—It should be observed, that O'CONNOR himself is one of the persons employed in conducting the ARGUS, and, of course, the article here extracted may be fairly looked upon as containing his declaration on the subject of which it treats.

*Extract from the Argus of Nov. 20.*

The Morning Chronicle of the 11th Nov. after heartily abusing the Argus, in the same paragraph levels its scurrility against Arthur O'Connor, by observing, "that he is the man, whom even Irish rebels must despise, and whom every honest Englishman must detest. It must be endured, because it cannot be prevented, that this man should walk the streets of Paris, boasting of his treasons, and rendering society odious to its English visitors, by his intrusions." We wish to know upon what principle ARTHUR O'CONNOR is to be despised by Irish rebels. Is it, because he saved the lives of Oliver Bond, and other Irish patriots, that he is to be detested by Irishmen? Does the Morning Chronicle forget their abuse against the late administration for the system they pursued in Ireland? Did they not cordially agree with Mr. Fox, when, speaking on the affairs of Ireland, at the *Shakespeare Tavern*, on the 10th of October, 1800, he made use of the following words.—"From what has happened in a neighbouring country, it appears still more clearly, that there is a fixed and systematic plan for depriving the cause of liberty, and enslaving the people. Tumults were excited by the most unjustifiable measures, and afterwards were quelled by means of the most dreadful atrocities. Villages were set on fire—torture in its most horrid forms was employed to gain discoveries, and military power was freed of all CONTROL from civil authority. Yet both in this

country, and in Ireland, government had been complimented for suppressing the rebellion, though it had been suppressed by acts still more reprehensible than those which originally fomented it. That unhappy country has now, by a continuation of the same system of tyranny and oppression, been forced into what is called an union, and thus deprived of every thing dear to it as an independent state. I do not speak of the policy of the measure in the abstract, nor pronounce that in no circumstance it could have been advantageous or advisable; but I most strongly condemn the manner in which it was brought about. By the means of a Parliament, which it was allowed, did not fairly represent them, and was utterly incapable to govern them, these people were compelled, against their inclination, to give up their independence, and to abandon their separate existence."

After these expressions, could Mr. Fox, with any propriety, decline seeing Mr. O'Connor in Paris? But we are very certain, that the moment the Editors of the Morning Chronicle shall have learnt, from Mr. Fox and Mr. ERSKINE themselves, that they were REALLY IN HABITS OF INTIMACY with Mr. O'CONNOR, they will instantly change their tone, and no longer talk of Mr. O'CONNOR having been obnoxious to the opposition members, during their stay in Paris!!!

## FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Paris, Nov. 22.—Citizen Bruyere, aid-de-camp to General Leclerc, is arrived at Paris; he left the Cape on the 10th of Oct.—General Leclerc, Gen. Dugua, and Gen. Rochambeau, were at the head of their troops, and in the best state of health; the rains had been this year fifteen days later, and the sickness at the Cape still preserved all its malignity. On the 7th, however, the first rains fell, and already in the interior the sickness has ceased.—Gen. Leclerc had collected in the arsenals 45,000 muskets, of which the blacks had been disarmed: 12 or 15,000 more were still expected.—A negro general of the name of Bellair, had revolted, and assembled around him some hundreds of the brigands, who had set fire to several habitations in the plain of the Cape; he had, however, been arrested and shot.—A strong fermentation manifested itself amongst the blacks during the latter end of August, and beginning of September. Seeing our hospitals crowded with sick, and our soldiers unable to quit their cantonments on account of the excessive heat, the negroes were emboldened to act.—The Polish Legion, which disembarked on the 7th of October, displayed great bravery and courage in the pursuit of the Brigands.—Gen. Leclerc visited the hospitals and the barracks, and did all that was possible for man to do, to diminish the effects of the dreadful yellow fever.—Madame Leclerc on her part refused to quit the colony, and declared that she would not leave it until she was certain that her care was no longer necessary to her husband, and that the sister of the First Consul ought to know how to die in the midst of a camp.—The Convoy of troops from Carthage, and one of the convoys from Rochefort, were not then arrived.—(Moniteur.)

A part of the Deputies of the Helvetic Republic, arrived at Paris some days ago. A deput-



tion of fifteen of them had an audience last Tuesday, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

*Cairo, Oct. 12.*—The Pacha, who takes at Cairo the title of Viceroy, is fortifying with great activity the palace which Buonaparte occupied, under the apprehension that he may be besieged there by the Beys, who have taken possession of Upper Egypt, and extend their power even to the Pyramids. The troops of the Pacha have been five times beat by those of the Beys.—The English are still at Alexandria. General Stewart commands there with 4000 men.—The Turks have 3000 men at Damietta, 2000 at Rosetta, and 20,000 at Cairo.

*Banks of the Mein, Nov. 16.*—The English Ambassador, at Vienna, transmitted lately to the Count de Cobentzel a note, relative to the affairs of Switzerland, the object of which was, to engage the Emperor to interfere with the French Government, in favour of the re-establishment of the ancient régime in Helvetia; but the Court of Vienna not only formally refused to interfere in the affairs of that country, but moreover, as it is said, ordered M. de Diesbach, who was desirous of presenting letters of credence, in the name of the diet of Schwitz, to quit the Austrian States.

*Berne, Nov. 11.*—Orders had been given for the disarming of the people of Helvetia in general: but representation having been made upon this subject, it is now determined that those only shall be disarmed who took part with the insurgents.

#### DOMESTIC.

On the 24th instant, his Majesty held a Levee at St. James's, which was numerously attended, it being the first after the opening of Parliament. The presentations were, Mr. Portalis, Secretary to the French Ambassador, accompanied by Messrs. Geveria and Bagne, Aid-de-Camps, by Andreossi; Lord Lowther, Lord Robert Tottenham, Lord Glendore, and the Hon. Mr. Lambe.

The Privy Council met on Friday the 19th inst. for the further examination of Col. Despard, and the other persons taken up on suspicion of treasonable practices. Two printed copies of the Oath administered at the Oakley Arms were found in the Colonel's pocket: He is fully committed to Newgate to take his trial for High Treason. Among the papers found in the possession of the prisoners, were seditious toasts and songs, but the most material was, one declaratory of certain rights, with a copy of the oath taken on becoming a member. It begins with—"Constitution, Independence of Ireland and Great-Britain, Equalization of all Civic Rights." Then follows an assurance that the members will unite to maintain the families of all those heroes who may fall in contending for their rights.

It appearing that this alarming combination had agents in different parts of the country, particularly in the manufacturing towns, messengers have been dispatched to the magistrates of these places, with instructions to take the speediest and most effectual measures to make every possible discovery relative to the subject.—On Saturday the 20th inst. several of the persons implicated underwent a further examination. The whole of the persons yet discovered amount to 36, amongst whom are four soldiers of the Guards.

The Privy Council met again on Wednesday the 24th inst. Fourteen of the persons in custody were brought up for examination; and several

warrants were issued for the apprehension of other persons supposed to be implicated in this conspiracy.

#### PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.\*

*November, 19, 20, and 21.*

On the above days no business of importance was transacted. Both houses were chiefly employed in swearing in new members.

*Tuesday, November 23.*

**HOUSE OF LORDS.**—This day at half past two, his Majesty went in state to the House of Peers, and being seated, in his royal robes, on the throne, the Commons attended at the bar. His Majesty then opened the session with the following most gracious speech:—

#### HIS MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*—It is highly gratifying to Me to resort to your advice and assistance, after the opportunity which has been recently afforded, of collecting the sense of My People.—The internal prosperity of the country has realized My most sanguine hopes; We have experienced the bounty of Divine Providence in the produce of an abundant harvest.—The state of the Manufactures, Commerce, and Revenues of My United Kingdom, is flourishing beyond example; and the Loyalty and Attachment which are manifested to My Person and Government, afford the strongest indication of the just sense that is entertained of the numerous blessings enjoyed under the protection of our happy Constitution.—In my intercourse with Foreign Powers, I have been actuated by a sincere disposition for the maintenance of Peace. It is nevertheless impossible for Me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy, by which the interests of other States are connected with Our own; and I cannot therefore be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and strength. My conduct will be invariably regulated by a due consideration of the actual situation of Europe, and by a watchful solicitude for the permanent welfare of My People.—You will, I am persuaded, agree with Me in thinking, that it is incumbent upon Us to adopt those means of security which are best calculated to afford the prospect of preserving to My Subjects the Blessings of Peace.—*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*—I have ordered the estimates for the ensuing year to be laid before you; and I rely on your zeal and liberality in providing for the various branches of the Public Service; which it is a great satisfaction to Me to think, may be fully accomplished without any considerable addition to the burdens of My People.—*My Lords and Gentlemen,*—I contemplate with the utmost satisfac-

\* A correct report of the debates in both houses of parliament, from the commencement of the present session to the Christmas vacation, will be given in the SUPPLEMENT to the present volume of the Register, which will be ready for delivery on the 15th of January, 1803, at farthest. This Supplement will also contain "A Complete Collection of all the Debates upon the Preliminary and Definitive Treaty of Peace with France;" in which collection the prominent passages of each speech are particularly pointed out.



tion, the great and increasing Benefits produced by that important measure, which has united the interests and consolidated the resources of Great-Britain and Ireland. The improvement and extension of these advantages, will be objects of your unremitting care and attention. The trade and commerce of My Subjects, so essential to the support of public credit, and of our maritime strength, will, I am persuaded, receive from you every possible encouragement; and you will readily lend your assistance in affording to mercantile transactions in every part of My United Kingdom, all the facility and accommodation that may be consistent with the public revenue.—To uphold the honour of the country, to encourage its industry, to improve its resources, and to maintain the true principles of the Constitution in Church and State, are the great and leading duties which you are called upon to discharge. In the performance of them, you may be assured of My uniform and cordial support; it being My earnest wish to cultivate a perfect harmony and confidence between Me and My Parliament, and to promote to the utmost the welfare of My faithful subjects, whose interests and happiness I shall ever consider as inseparable from My own.

Lord Arden moved the address, which was, as usual, an echo of the speech, and was seconded by Lord Nelson. A debate took place on the danger to be apprehended from the encroachments of France. It was commenced by the Marquis of Abercorn, and supported by Lords Carlisle, Grenville, and Carington: the speakers on the other side of the question were the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Pelham, and Lord Hobart. The address was agreed to, *nemine dissentiente*.

Lord Walsingham was appointed chairman of the committee of privilege, of all the committees of the House, and of the private committees during the session.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—The House was engaged until half past two in swearing in members; when the Usher of the Black Rod appeared at the bar, and stated his Majesty's command, that the House should attend him forthwith in the House of Peers. The Speaker, accompanied by several members, proceeded accordingly, and on his return, the House resumed the swearing in of members.

Mr. Wallace brought in the Clandestine Outlawry bill, which was read a first, and ordered to be read a second time.

The usual committees of privileges, grievances, courts of justice, trade, and standing orders, were appointed. The several standing orders of the House were read and agreed to.

The Speaker then read his Majesty's speech (see p. 690). The address was moved by Mr. Trench, and seconded by Mr. Curzon: after which, an interesting debate ensued, on the conduct of France, since the conclusion of the treaty of peace, and on the inability of ministers to conduct a war, if war should be found expedient. This opinion was maintained by Mr. Cartwright, who was followed on the same side by Sir John Wrottesley, Messrs. Canning, Windham, T. Grenville, and Sir H. Milnmay: the speakers on the other side were Mr. Pycher, Mr. Fox, Lord Hawkesbury, Mr. Addington, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Whitbread. The address was voted, *nemine contradicente*.

Wednesday, November 24.

HOUSE OF LORDS.—The Lord Chamberlain brought

a message from his Majesty, informing their lordships, that he would be ready to receive the address of the House, at St. James's, at three o'clock.

A variety of arrangements were made relative to the hearing of Scotch appeals; and some proceedings respecting private business took place.

The Lords went with their address to St. James's, at half after two.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Sundry unimportant petitions were presented: petitions were also presented against the election of the members for the following places, viz. Great Grimsby, Penryn, Borough of Stanmaer, Nottingham, Barnstaple, Chippenham, Caermarthenshire, Coventry, and Bridgewater.

Mr. Trench then brought up the report of the address on the King's speech. On the question for the second reading, Mr. Wilberforce rose, and delivered his sentiments on the propriety of abandoning continental connexions, and on the necessity and wisdom of maintaining peace, a debate of a similar nature to the one of yesterday. Mr. Wilberforce was supported in his opinions by Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Johnstone, General Maitland, Mr. Yorke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Addington, Sir James Pulteney, Lord Hawkesbury, and Mr. Bragge. The speakers on the other side of the question were Mr. Elliot, Mr. Dillon, Lord Temple, Mr. Windham, Lord Morpeth, and Mr. Canning.

The report of the address was agreed to *nemine*.

Mr. Vansittart gave notice, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would move to-morrow, for leave to bring in a bill for the better establishing and regulating the militia of Ireland.

Mr. Vansittart moved for "An Account of the Produce of the Permanent Taxes for the Years ending the 10th of Oct. 1801, and the 10th Oct. 1802." "An Account of the Amount of Bounties paid on the Importation of Corn and Rice for the same periods," and "An Account of the Amount of Exchequer Bills, issued under the Act of the 41st Geo. III. ch. 4, now outstanding and unprovided for."

Thursday, November 25,

HOUSE OF PEERS.—Two naturalization bills were brought in; and some arrangements made relative to the hearing of Scotch appeals.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Mr. Burdon moved for leave to bring in a bill for continuing the suspension of an Act of the 15th and 17th of his present Majesty, prohibiting the circulation of Promissory Notes, under a certain value.—Leave granted. A petition was presented from the Burgh of Kircudbright, in Scotland, complaining of an undue election.

Mr. Corry moved for leave to bring in a bill for the Regulation and more effectually enrolling of the Militia of Ireland.—Leave granted.

Mr. Vansittart moved, that that part of his Majesty's speech, relative to the public service should be read: he also moved, that a supply be granted to his Majesty; and that that part of his Majesty's speech should be referred to a committee of the whole House to-morrow.

At a quarter before 3 o'clock the House adjourned, and the Speaker, accompanied by several members, proceeded to St. James's with the address.



## PUBLIC PAPERS.

*Note addressed by the French Minister at the Diet of Ratisbon, to the Imperial Plenipotentiary, and to the Sub-Delegate for Bohemia, and which had been communicated to him by the said Minister, and afterwards by the Russian Minister.*

The undersigned received on the 26th inst. a Note of the Imperial Plenipotentiary and the Sub-Delegate of Bohemia, containing the communication of the same wishes which they made at the opening of the Extraordinary Deputation of the Empire: he finds with confidence, and with the most lively interest, the hope of the approaching co-operation of his Imperial Majesty, in the intention of the mediating powers, and is very far from doubting that his Majesty has not made propositions the most proper, to remove every difficulty. That object may, however, be accomplished, without the deputation suspending its labours, which are too necessary for the tranquillity of Germany, and which at the same time will actuate the moment so much desired by his Imperial Majesty himself.—The undersigned seizes with true pleasure, this opportunity of renewing, as well to his Excellency the Imperial Plenipotentiary as to the Sub-Delegate of Bohemia, the assurance of his high consideration.

Ratisbon, Oct. 30, 1802.

(Signed)—*Laforest.*

*Proclamation issued by the King of Prussia at Hildesheim.*

His Majesty the King of Prussia, &c. our most gracious Sovereign, after an examination of the accusations spread against the order of La Trappe, in obedience to an order of the Cabinet, of the 18th ult. has been pleased to allow the monks of La Trappe to remain in the country for the present, and till their further destination shall be arranged, but on condition that they shall neither take novices, nor bring into the country members of any other establishment of monks of La Trappe. They are also commanded, under the severest penalties, immediately to give up their establishment, for the education of children, and to restore all their pupils to their parents. All parents and guardians, whose residence is not known, are hereby required immediately to take back their children, and to apply for that purpose to the magistracy at Paderborn, who are commanded to lend them all possible assistance in claiming their children.—Done at Paderborn, Nov. 1, 1802, by his Majesty's special command,—*Schulenberg.*

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE, 1802.

*St. James's, Nov. 17.*—This day General Andréossi, Ambassador from the French Republic, had his first private Audience of his Majesty to deliver his Credentials:—To which he was introduced by the Right Hon. Lord Hawkesbury, his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and conducted by Sir Stephen Cottrell, Knt. Master of the Ceremonies.

*Nov. 18.*—This day General Andréossi, Ambassador from the French Republic, had his first private Audience of her Majesty:—To which he was introduced by Edward Desbrow, Esq. Vice-Chamberlain to her Majesty, and conducted by Robert Chester, Esq. Assistant-Master of the Ceremonies.

## BANKRUPTS.

Barriat; Phineas, Strand, goldsmith.—Fowler, William, Shefford, coal merchant.—Turner, W. Floore, baker.—Mills, Daniel, Liverpool, merchant.—Moyser, Jos. Sutton, miller.—Curtis, Michael, and J. Scott, Watling-street, wine merchants.—Ball, James, Taunton, hawker.—Fowler, Wm. Shefford, and Matthew Hayes, Hatton Garden, merchants.—Stretch, Thomas, Grafton-street, grocer.—Hambly, Wm. Bell-alley, merchant.—Hore, James, Inner Temple, scrivener.—Bird, John, Park-street, butcher.—Prager, Mark, Finsbury-place, grocer.—Ketland, James, Bishopsgate-street, merchant.—Payne, Jos. Birmingham, upholsterer.—Lewis, Timothy, Newport, coal merchant.—Burbage, Samuel, Fenny Stratton, inn-holder.—Tinniswood, Jos. Erampton, linen-draper.—Terrane, George, Jermyn-street, merchant.—Wigstead, Wm. Charing Cross, stationer.

STOCKS.	SAT.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.
Bank Stock.	—	—	178½	—	—	179½
3 pr. C.R. An.	67	67	67	66½	66½	66½
3 per C. Con.	68	67½	67½	67½	67½	67½
4 pr C. Cons.	83½	83	83	82½	82½	83
5 pr Ct. Ann.	101½	101½	101½	100½	100½	100½
Bank L. Ann.	10½	10½	10½	10½	10½	10½
D <sup>s</sup> . 1778 & 9	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 per Ct. 1797	100½	100½	100½	100	99½	100
Omnium	10½ di	10½ di	10½ di	10½ di	10½ di	10½ di

## LONDON COURSE OF EXCHANGE.

AMSTER. C.F. 11 6 2 us.	LEGHORN	50½
D <sup>o</sup> , at sight 11 4½	NAPLES	42½
ROTTERDAM 11 7 2 us.	GENOA	40½
HAMBURGH 33 10 2½ us.	VENICE, 51 livres piccole	
ALTONA.... 33 11 2½ us.	effective per £. ster.	
PARIS 1 day 23 6	LISBON	67½
PARIS..... 24 10 2 us.	OPORTO	67½
BOURDEAUX, 24 11	DUBLIN	11½
CADIZ .... 35½	BILBOA	37 D <sup>o</sup>
MADRID .. 36½ effective	AGIO, bank on Hol.	p.

## PRICES CURRENT IN LONDON.

Eng. Wheat pr q. 50s. to 60s.	Hops per cwt. 120s. to 230s.
Rye..... 30 .. 3. 4	Hay per load.... 80 .. 150
Barley..... 31 .. 3. 8	Beef, per stone 4s. to 5s.
Malt..... 46 .. 5. 1	Mutton 5s. od. to 6s. od.
Oats..... 14 .. 2. 3	Veal .... 4s. od. to 6s. od.
Pease (white).... 39 .. 4. 2	Pork.... 5s. 6d. to 7s. 6d.
Beans (horse).... 35 .. 3. 8	Tallow ..... 3s. 10d.
Flour per sack .. 50 .. 5. 4	Av. of Sugar pr cw 34s. 3d
Seconds..... 45 .. 5. 0	Salt, per Bushel 13s. 10d.
Coals per chal.... 49 .. 4. 5	Lead 9½d the Quar. Loaf.

\* \* \* *The Letter to Lord Auckland, which could not be divided, and which relates to a subject deeply interesting to every body, has compelled us to postpone the insertion of several valuable articles from Correspondents.*



## SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

The last week has not, that we have yet heard, seen the destruction of any kingdom or principality, except, perhaps, in the Empire of Germany, where the work of *indemnifying* does not appear to be quite finished: when it is, Citizen Talleyrand will, perhaps, condescend to supply the surrounding nations with a list of the states of Europe, as the Consul intends them to remain. Whether Switzerland will be a name upon this list, or whether it will form a department or two of France, appears, at present, to be altogether uncertain. And here we cannot refrain from observing on the infatuation, which has prevailed in England, with respect to the Swiss and their government. At first the success of the "patriots" was regarded as certain; their triumph in some trifling skirmishes came in confirmation of this opinion. Buonaparté issued his proclamation; this was to fill the Swiss with indignation and fury; it had a contrary effect; it produced a promise of *submission*, and yet the words of the Swiss themselves were not believed; it was certainly a "*com-promise*." The next post brought us word, that the Diet of Schwitz was absolutely dissolved, and that French troops had marched into every principal post in the country. This looked more like subjugation; but still there was "*great hope* in the "*exertions of Reding and his comrades*." To blast, however, this last foolish hope, we are now informed, that Reding and the principal patriots have been arrested by an order of the French government, and imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon, on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, where, we dare say, they are full as secure as, in the days of "*despotism*," they would have been, in the Bastille of Paris. But, this is not all, the "*Helvetic government*," that is to say, Buonaparté's Swiss government, that is to say the government which we left in that country, at the date of the treaty of Amiens, and which we *tacitly acknowledge* by that treaty, has, amongst the first of its new series of oppressions, issued a proclamation, (which we shall insert in our next sheet), by which it calls upon the miserable people to "*furnish EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS for the support of the French troops, which their insurrections have caused to enter the country*."—Long may the countries we love, long may Ireland, long may England and Scotland, long, very long, may they be free from such contributions! It is our humble and hearty prayer that they

may, but that they *will* we have not the confidence to say.

There are, it seems, two demi-brigades of French troops, consisting of about 3,000 men, expected to embark very shortly, from Helvoetsluys for *Louisiana*, where several French engineers and commissaries arrived in September last. *Provisions are to be furnished by the Dutch*, and the men are to be conveyed in *fifteen American merchant ships*, under convoy of two French frigates from Brest. The American ships have been engaged in Holland, and will, of course, be paid for by the Batavians, whose new name has already cost them pretty dear. Thus, then, of this whole armament, which, in its object, is one of the most important that ever sailed from the ports of Europe, France furnishes, at her own expense, only the two frigates, which are, perhaps, besides, manned, in great part, and victualled altogether, by the Dutch! And yet there are persons, who are still weak enough to rely, for the security of England, on the *poverty* of France; on her want of "*credit, capital, and confidence*!"

For about the 20th time, it is reported, that LECLERC is dead, at St. Domingo. This may, at last, be true\*; and we wish it were not more probable than those other accounts, which we hear of, from the same quarter, of insurrections and plagues, that are likely to induce the French to *evacuate* the Island! From our souls we wish, that we may not be compelled to evacuate the Island of Britain sooner! We are perfectly serious. In no time or country did infatuation ever prevail in so great a degree as in this country, at this time, and upon this particular subject. The produce and the trade of the French part of St. Domingo are already greater, *far greater*, than the produce and trade of Jamaica; and we call upon the friends of the ministers to contradict this statement if they can; if they *dare*, we have proofs, indubitable proofs, wherewith to establish our assertions. But, as we have constantly observed, it is not as a source of direct gain, that St. Domingo, or any other part of the West Indies, is valuable in the estimation of France. Our sapient ministers, our "*safe* politicians," have proclaimed to the world, that we have made peace for the "*wise purpose of recruiting our*

\* Since our writing this the French papers have brought us the intelligence that will be found in p. 688, and which once more mars the hopes of those who relied on the alliance of the yellow fever of St. Domingo, once more disturbs the "*paradise of fools*" and of cowards.



"strength, of husbanding our resources," in order to be able, in a few years' time to cope with France; and this, therefore, is what France will prevent us from doing, by destroying our commerce and colonies as much as lies in her power. She does not want to take Jamaica for the sake of any other sort of gain than that which she will derive from our loss. *Eight thousand* French troops arrived at St. Domingo, from Europe, late in September, when the sickness must have been nearly over; and, on the 10th of October another convoy of troops was daily expected from *Cartagena* and a third from Rochefort. There were upwards of *twenty thousand* already there, besides disciplined blacks, making, altogether, an effective army of not less than forty thousand men; and these men commanded by some of the most skilful and enterprising officers in the world, and lying at no more than five hours sail from the most valuable of all our colonies. A descent on the Island of Jamaica is so practicable, so easy, that, if it be not accomplished before this day twelvemonths, unless we greatly augment our force in the West Indies, we shall be disposed to join Mr. Fox and Lord Castlereagh in extolling the *moderation* of Buonaparté.—On this subject, too, we cannot but refer to the arguments of those, who, afraid to rely upon their own exertions, would fain persuade themselves and their hearers, that France must ultimately fail, in the West Indies, or elsewhere, for want of money. What does she want money for? "Man and steel, the soldier and his sword," her own fruitful, and now almost boundless territories produce in abundance. What does she want money for? Not to enable commissaries and quarter-masters-general to return home with the fortunes of Nabobs; not to enable her generals to take leave of absence, and to lounge away their time in the laps of the harlots of Philadelphia and New York, and there to libel their master both by their actions and their words. For what, then, does she want money? She wants money to pay for the provisions necessary to the support of an army of fifty thousand men, and this money she finds, not in France, nor in Spain, nor in Holland, nor in America, but in *England!* In answer to objections like those above referred to, it was, in the letters on the peace, p. 186, observed, that France would find capital on the *Royal Exchange of London*; and, this conjecture is now fully established by the fact, to which, we suspect, Mr. Windham alluded, in the debate of Tuesday last, in the House of Commons, and which we think it

our duty fully to explain: As soon as Buonaparté determined, after the signature of the preliminaries, to send out a fleet and army to the West Indies, application was made to the house of Willings, of Philadelphia, to supply them with provisions. This application was accompanied with a proposal, that Messrs. Willings should draw, for payment on the joint firm of three of the most respectable houses of Paris, which the Americans wisely refused, and preferring one house in London. This was agreed to; the house of Sir Francis Baring was fixed on, and that house has actually paid Messrs. Willings for the provisions so supplied. For this statement we have unquestionable authority. We do not mean to insinuate, that there is any thing at all blame-worthy in the conduct of the house of Sir Francis Baring. It is a mere mercantile transaction, of which, if that house had refused it, another would, undoubtedly, have accepted. We have been led into this explanation by the desire which we have to undeceive our readers on a subject, with respect to which a very great and very dangerous error prevails; to wit: that France has neither "capital, credit nor confidence," which we possess to such an unlimited degree, and without which no nation is capable of exertion, particularly beyond the limits of the mother country. It is notorious, that the conquerors of St. Domingo sailed out of Brest Water with *sixteen thousand pounds* in their military chest, hardly enough to lay in sweet-meats for one of Mr. Dundas's heroic West India generals; but, as we observed once before, if France be poor in purse, she is rich in friends. She is perfectly at home, in every country in the world: first she drew upon the Dutch, next upon the Spaniards, but, unwilling to exhaust her poor neighbours, she took the laudable and generous course, and drew upon us, who had been boasting of our wealth.

We have heard no more of the sailing of the Toulon fleet, which we suppose is yet in port. It consists of twelve sail of the line and seven frigates, and it is certain that troops have been marching into Toulon for some time.—On the subject of French naval preparations, we observed in our last (p. 647.) that Buonaparté had launched *eighteen ships of war* since the signature of the preliminaries, but, by a mistake of the press, they were called ships of the line. There were, we understood, seven of the line, six frigates, and five of smaller size, which account, we perceive agrees with Mr. Windham's statement in the House of Commons, except as to the smaller vessels.—The circumstance,



mentioned by the same right hon. gentleman, respecting the quantity of hemp imported by France from Russia, during the season which is now about to close, is, too, of very great importance. This quantity was stated at *ten thousand tons*, far, we believe, within bounds, but certainly equal to the quantity imported for the use of the British navy in any one year even of war. Yet France has *no money*! Great part of this hemp has, too, been shipped from Russia to France by *English merchants*, and in English bottoms. And yet France has neither "credit nor confidence!" Not a single sailor has she discharged, and it is notorious, that she has taken thousands of ours into her pay. And yet we are confidently told to rely upon her *poverty* for our safety! We do not fear, that France will be able to create a navy capable of *disputing with ours the sovereignty of the sea*: she has no such foolish intention. But, we do fear, that she will very soon be in a situation to give us continual uneasiness; we do fear, that she will, by keeping up an army of *embarkation* in the Netherlands, be able to fix our regards on the county of Essex, while she falls upon Ireland, an object for which we should not be at all surprized if the Toulon expedition be intended, more especially when we consider, that our retention of some of the places to be restored would furnish a plausible, and, perhaps, a justifiable, pretext for such a most dangerous act of hostility.

The French official paper, the *Moniteur*, which we, from day to day, see more and more reason to call *le livre des destins*, has put forth a sort of manifesto against our East-India domination. The passage (in the *Moniteur* of the 17th inst.) we more particularly allude to is this:—"The affairs of India are not foreign to any of the powers of Europe. The spoils of India serve, not merely to enrich those who appropriate them; the conqueror employs them to corrupt the counsellors and agents of other princes and states. With gold in his hand, he procures the adoption of resolutions contrary to the national interest; and, on this account, *European tyranny cannot be extended in India*, without the peace and prosperity of Europe being menaced and disturbed."—This passage makes part of a sort of preface to a translation of our parliamentary papers respecting the deposition of the Nabob of Arcot. Their object and tendency are evident. The jealousy, the envy, and the hatred, which they are admirably calculated to excite against us, in all the courts and countries of the continent, will

be necessary to insure the connivance of those courts and countries, with respect to a project, which is intended to cut off the principal arm of Britain, if the blow aimed at her heart should fail.—Nothing can be more fully descriptive of the rooted hatred, of the unquenchable thirst of destruction, which the republicans of France have with respect to this country; and, whatever traitors and fanatics may unite in saying to the contrary, that hatred, that desire to destroy, are general through the republic. The whole of France, as she now is, has, with one voice, one mind, and one heart, sworn not only our ruin and disgrace, but our utter extirpation.—To resist a foe thus disposed and resolved, and having at her absolute command more than half of the human power in the world, we have the skill and the courage of the Hawkesburies and the Addingtons!

Since our last, his Majesty has met his Parliament, and has graciously condescended to deliver to them a speech from the throne. His Majesty was, on this occasion, received by the thousands who were assembled to see him, with every demonstration of joy, with every expression of loyalty, veneration, and love!—Would to God, that the heads of his ministers were as good as the hearts of his people!

To describe the system of Ministers, to guess even at the measures they mean to adopt, would be no easy matter. They are so light in themselves, and receive their impulse from so many and such conflicting directions, they are so truly a reed shaken with the wind, that it is impossible to say which way they will next bend, or into what form they will next be blown and battered. Nothing can more strongly mark their imbecility, their total ignorance of foreign affairs, their absolute incapacity for conducting any thing of moment, the contempt in which they are held all over Europe, than their late, compared with their present tone and conduct with respect to Switzerland. It was on the 4th of October, that they published, in the *True Briton*, (which is as much their official paper as the *Moniteur* is the official paper of Buonaparté), their first manifesto against the encroachments of France. In that paper, they asserted, that the interference of the Consul in the affairs of Switzerland, made "the cause of that country a common one with every power not a voluntary slave to the influence of France;" and, added they, "a resistance to the system at present pursued by Buonaparté, becomes a duty in the rulers of every free country."—On the 11th of October,

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(we still quote the True Briton): "The cool sneering insolence, the haughty supercilious arrogance, of this last proclamation" (the proclamation of Buonaparté) "would provoke the resistance of the most timid, to put a stop to a SYSTEM OF AGGRESSION, a submission to which has tarnished the honour, and nearly destroyed the independence of Europe."—On the 19th of October: "Scarcely one month has passed, since the signature of the preliminaries of peace, which has not been attended with the adoption of measures on the part of the French government, calculated to excite the just jealousy and apprehensions of this nation \* \* \* They" [the Ministers] "will not quietly suffer Buonaparté to destroy the independence of Switzerland: they will not suffer him, by a virtual infringement of the peace he has made with us, to oppress and subdue other nations, or to aggrandize his power, so as to increase the danger to ourselves. \* \* \* They will not suffer the country to be conquered in peace—they will not permit themselves to be deluded by the name, when they cannot obtain the thing; and they know, that the result, even of an UNSUCCESSFUL war would not, in all probability, be more fatal to us than the completion of that system, on the part of France, of which we have spoken."—On the 30th of October: "His Majesty's ministers cannot proceed to carry into effect the articles of the treaty with France, which relate to the cessions to be made, without new stipulations. If the Chief Consul annexes Piedmont to the Republic, let us keep Malta—if he interferes in the affairs of Holland" [which he has never ceased to do], "let us keep the Cape, Demerara, and Essequibo. \* \* \* Ministers wish for peace, if we can preserve it without a sacrifice of our honour and our interests—but to cling to a feverish, restless peace, denying us the advantages of a state of real tranquillity—to make use of the interval to restore our conquests—and to see (what the conduct of France gives us too much reason to suppose we should see) the war break out again, as soon as we had made all our restitutions, would be to take a line of conduct which his Majesty's ministers will not adopt, and which none can recommend, except those who would see with pleasure the aggrandizement of France and the ruin of the British Empire."—This was their language on the 30th of October; in five days afterwards their tone

was thus softened: "The King's ministers will be moderate but firm.—They must, at the same time, recollect how much the relative situation of France with this country is changed since the signature of the Treaty of Amiens; but, if any compromise can be made with respect to the conquests we still retain, reserving to us even less than our just demands, we trust they will be disposed to evince their moderation by accepting such compromise, rather THAN HAVE RECOURSE TO THE DREADFUL ALTERNATIVE OF WAR."—Now, it behoves us to enquire what could have wrought this great and sudden change in the language and sentiments of those "safe politicians." Not any alteration in the system, not any relaxation in the violent proceedings of Buonaparté, who had actually marched his troops into Switzerland, who had done what the ministers had declared they would not suffer him to do, and who, in addition to his actions, had made use of words declarative of his resolution, not only to persevere in his system, but had so explained that system as to leave no doubt of his intention to cut us off, for ever, from all connection with the Continent of Europe. But (mark well the important circumstance) the same manifesto (see p. 565), which contained these insolent and domineering threats against their country, also contained an observation, that Buonaparté approved of the Ministers themselves, and deprecated the views of those who wished to remove them from their places. This, this it was, which, in our opinion, changed the tone of the men, who have "an hereditary disposition to office." We are perfectly serious. From our souls we believe, that to this and this alone we have to attribute, that we are now at peace. People laugh at the Addingtons and Hawkesburies: they laughed at the Helvetic government; but the latter is now mocking the mocker, and the former will keep their places, in spite of all the efforts that can be made against them, unless such an union can be brought about as would conciliate the wishes and rouse the spirit of the people, and command the respect and confidence of foreign nations; and that such an union should be formed is the most improbable of all improbable things. The very men, with some few exceptions, who support the Ministers, agree with us as to their total incapacity to conduct the affairs of the nation; but, as to the remedy, we differ. The calling in of Mr. Pitt, would, without a radical change of system and of notions, and without an



union of talents, character, and courage, in every department of the State, only serve to eke out the disgraceful existence of the country for a few years, or, perhaps, a few months; and, if we are to be sacrificed, it is little matter by whom; the meaner the instrument, as far as we know, the better; it would be a poor consolation to see the name of Pitt, a name in which we have gloried, coupled with the final destruction of England. "To defend Gibraltar," said Burke, "is worthy of the genius and the courage of an Elliot; to deliver its keys to the enemy, is a task which had better be performed by a drunken invalid."

We congratulate the ministers on the support which they are likely to receive from the hearty and united efforts of Messrs. Fox and Wilberforce, and Sir Francis Burdett. We could not listen to the long and painful endeavours of the former of these, to persuade the nation that we have nothing to prepare against but a *rivalité* in trade and commerce, without recollecting a most remarkable passage in the letter of our valuable correspondent SWENSKA, p. 132. "Buonaparté intends to amuse you with a rivalry in trade and national improvement: if you believe him, you will not long be his rival in power"—To this we have nothing to add, except it be to remark, that the letter was published in London so long ago as the 7th of August.—Mr. Wilberforce reproves the country for putting its trust in talents and human wisdom, instead of listening to the counsels of simple, common men, men in the middle class of society, a reproof, which it certainly does not merit.

Every thing that has transpired, during the last four or five days, tends more and more to convince us, that England is fast approaching to her final doom, and that she deserves no longer to escape the chastisement of Heaven. She has on her all the marks of a degenerate and falling nation. Since the 1st of October, 1801, how rapid has been her decline! We may be mistaken; we hope we are; but, with the consciousness that we stand in the presence of God, we do declare it to be our opinion, that, if the present course be pursued, a very short time will see this island in the possession of France.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

Our readers will perceive (p. 689) that the Emperor has refused to have any connection with us, in remonstrating in behalf of the

Swiss Cantons.—This is as it should be. We are "too honest," the receivers of Trinidad and Ceylon are "too honest;" those who gave up Guiana, and who abandoned the Stadholder and the French Royalists, are truly "too honest" for the Emperor of Germany to be connected with!—It is to be hoped, that the Ministers will take an early opportunity of laying before Parliament, the papers relative to the remonstrance which they made to Buonaparté, in behalf of the Swiss; and also those relative to the overtures made to the Emperor. Were we in their place, we should be very anxious to unload ourselves of the accumulation of disgrace, which has grown upon them since the last kind Parliament, by adopting their resolutions, had the goodness to take the burthen from their shoulders.

Just as this sheet was going to the press, we were informed of the arrival, in this country, of a number of those French commercial agents, of which we spoke some time ago. They are all understood to be experienced in military and naval matters, and are intended to reside in our several sea-ports, naval as well as commercial. Our wise and courageous ministers were alarmed at the proposition of sending such persons as these to line our coasts, as it were; and they actually refused to receive them, which refusal formed one of the subjects of dispute between the two countries. In the mean time, one of them was sent to the island of Jersey, where the Governor refused to receive him; but, where he has nevertheless remained, and does still remain, setting the Governor and his government at defiance; and, we are informed, that ministers have not had the courage to order him to be removed.—Impunity begets hardihood; accordingly a whole swarm of these agents have since been sent to England, in defiance of the declared will of His Majesty's Government; they are now arrived, and are actually, at this moment, in London. One of them, at least, is, we understand, destined for Ireland!!!

\*.\* Our next will contain a letter from Mr. Cobbett to the Hon. CHARLES JAMES FOX, relative to a misquotation which the latter made from the Political Register, and to divers other matters, particularly the "LIBERTY OF THE PRESS," of which Mr. Fox, till he breathed the all-regenerating air of St. Cloud, was a constant defender.

The next sheet will also contain a letter to Mr. Wm. WILBERFORCE, on his address to his honest honest Yorkshiremen, particularly those parts of the said address which relate to Parliamentary Honours, and Continental Connections.